

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
School and Division Accountability Committee
November 28, 2007

James Monroe Building
Jefferson Meeting Room, 22nd Floor
Richmond, Virginia
3:30p.m.

The following Board of Education members were present: Dr. Emblidge, Dr. Ward, Mrs. Saslaw, Mrs. Castro, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Rotherham, Dr. Brewster and Mr. Moore. Dr. Jones, was absent from the meeting. Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr., Superintendent of Public Instruction was also present to assist the committee in its work.

Welcome and Opening Comments

- Mr. David L. Johnson, Chairman of the committee welcomed presenters and speakers to the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

Discussion of Revisions to the Standards of Accreditation: Technical Diplomas and Graduation Rate Provisions

- Mrs. Anne Wescott, Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Communications made a PowerPoint presentation to the committee. The presentation outlined options that the committee may want to consider in proposing amendments to the Standards of Accreditation regarding the technical diplomas and the use of graduation rates in the calculation of accreditation ratings. The presentation is attached.

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Concepts for Consideration ***Requirements for the Technical*** ***and Advanced Technical Diplomas*** ***and Graduation Rate Benchmarks***

Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability

November 28, 2007

Statutory Base

- Section 22.1-253.13:3 of the *Code of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to promulgate standards for the accreditation of Virginia's K-12 public schools.
- This section of the *Code* also requires the Board to establish course and credit requirements for high school diplomas.

HB 2039 and SB 1147

- The 2007 General Assembly amended § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code to establish a Technical Diploma and an Advanced Technical Diploma.
 - *“D. In establishing course and credit requirements for a high school diploma, the Board (of Education) shall:*
...
3. Establish the requirements for a technical diploma. This diploma shall meet or exceed the requirements of a standard diploma and will include a concentration in career and technical education, as established in Board regulations. A student who meets the requirement for the advanced studies diploma who also fulfills a concentration in career and technical education shall receive an advanced technical diploma. The Board may develop or designate assessments in career and technical education for the purposes of awarding verified credit”

Additional Diplomas

Options for Students

- **While the amendments to § 22.1-253.13:3 require the Board to create the two diplomas, the diplomas are optional diplomas that students may pursue.**
- **School divisions must make the diplomas available to students; however, school divisions are not required to make all career concentrations available in all areas of study.**

Career Concentration

- The SOA would define “career concentrations” that students must achieve to receive the Technical or Advanced Technical Diploma.
- Any student striving for the Technical or Advanced Technical Diploma but does not achieve the career concentration requirements would have the ability to earn a Standard Diploma.

Career Concentration

- **Students could be required to achieve at least one of the following where appropriate in a career concentration:**
 - A complete industry certification program;
 - A pathway examination that leads to a completed industry certification;
 - A state-issued professional license; or
 - An occupational competency examination, such as those from the National Occupational Competency Institute (NOCTI).

Current Diploma Options

Key Differences

Standard Diploma:

- 22 standard credits (specific courses prescribed in mathematics, science, and history and social sciences)
- 6 verified credits in prescribed subjects
- CTE verified credits may substitute for science and history and social sciences
- 6 electives required of total credits

Advanced Studies:

- 24 standard credits (specific courses prescribed in mathematics, science, and history and social sciences exceeding rigor of Standard Diploma)
- 9 verified credits in prescribed subjects
- Foreign Language required
- 2 electives required of total credits

Board Policy Consideration

- **Students pursuing an Advanced Technical Diploma could be required to earn the Board of Education's**
 - **Career and Technical Education Seal;**
or
 - **Advanced Mathematics and Technology Seal.**

Board of Education

Diploma Seal Options

Career and Technical Education:

- Complete a prescribed sequence of courses in a CTE concentration or specialization and maintain a "B" or better average in those courses; or
- Pass an exam or an occupational competency assessment in a CTE concentration or specialization that confers certification or occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, trade or professional association; or
- Acquire a professional license in that CTE field from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Advanced Mathematics and Technology:

- Satisfy all mathematics requirements for the Advanced Studies Diploma with a "B" average or better; and
- Pass an exam in a CTE field that confers certification from a recognized industry, trade or professional association; or
- Acquire a professional license in a CTE field from the Commonwealth of Virginia; or
- Pass an exam approved by the Board that confers college-level credit in a technology or computer science area.

Technical Diploma Options for Board Consideration

Technical Diploma

Option I

- The course and credit requirements for this option would be the same as for the Standard Diploma, except:
 - Four CTE courses would be required instead of four of the six electives.
 - Courses completed to satisfy the CTE requirement must include a career concentration as approved by the Board of Education.
 - For concentrations that require less than four courses, students must complete additional courses that are related to the student's career concentration.

Technical Diploma - *Option I*

Discipline	Standard Credits	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Mathematics ^[1]	3	1
Laboratory Science ^{[2], [6]}	3	1
History and Social Sciences ^{[3], [6]}	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	1	
Electives ^[4]	2	
CTE Concentration	4	
Student Selected Test ^[5]		1
Total	22	6

Technical Diploma

Option I Course Content

- [1] Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of algebra and shall include at least two course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of algebra and geometry. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- [2] Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least two different science disciplines: earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- [3] Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and one course in either world history or geography or both. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- [4] Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include **a career and technical education concentration approved by the Board of Education.**
- [5] A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credits in computer science, technology, career and technical education or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.
- [6] Students who complete a career and technical [education] program sequence and pass an examination or occupational competency assessment in a career and technical education field that confers certification or an occupational competency credential from a recognized industry, or trade or professional association or acquires a professional license in a career and technical education field from the Commonwealth of Virginia may substitute the certification, competency credential, or license for (1) the student selected verified credit and (2) either a science or history or social science verified credit when the certification, license, or credential confers more than one verified credit. The examination or occupational competency assessment must be approved by the Board of Education as an additional test to verify student achievement.

Technical Diploma

Option II

- The course and credit requirements for this option would be the same as for Option I, except:
 - **Mathematics:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least three course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra Functions and Data Analysis or Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II.
 - **Laboratory science:** Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

Technical Diploma - *Option II*

Discipline	Standard Credits	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Mathematics ^[1]	3	1
Laboratory Science ^{[2], [6]}	3	1
History and Social Sciences ^{[3], [6]}	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Foreign Language	1	
Electives ^[4]	2	
CTE Concentration	4	
Student Selected Test ^[5]		1
Total	22	6

Advanced Technical Diploma Options for Board Consideration



Advanced Technical Diploma

Option I

- **The course and credit requirements for this option would be the same as for the Advanced Studies Diploma, except:**
 - **Four CTE courses would be required instead of two electives, and the total number of standard credits would be increased from 24 to 26.**
 - **Courses completed to satisfy the CTE requirement must include a career concentration as approved by the Board of Education.**
 - **For concentrations that require less than four courses, students must complete additional courses that are related to the student's career concentration.**



Advanced Technical Diploma

Option I

Discipline	Standard Credits	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Mathematics ^[1]	4	2
Laboratory Science ^[2]	4	2
History and Social Sciences ^[3]	4	2
Foreign Language ^[4]	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Career & Technical Education	1	
Electives ^[5]	0	
CTE Concentration	4	
Student Selected Test ^[6]		1
Total	26	9

Advanced Technical Diploma

Option I Course Content

- [1] Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of algebra and shall include at least three different course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- [2] Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- [3] Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and two courses in either world history or geography or both. The Board may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
- [4] Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include three years of one language or two years of two languages.
- [5] Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include **a career and technical education concentration approved by the Board of Education.**
- [6] A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career or technical education or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.

Advanced Technical Diploma

Option II

- The course and credit requirements for this option would be the same as for Option I, except:
 - Instead of four mathematics and four laboratory science courses, students could take five of one and three of the other.
 - Instead of one credit in either fine arts or CTE, the student could earn one credit in either fine arts or economics.
 - The number of standard credits for history/social science and foreign languages would be decreased by one credit each, and the total number of standard credits would remain 24.
 - Another option would be to increase the total credits to 26, and maintain four required standard credits for history and social sciences and three standard credits for foreign languages.

Advanced Technical Diploma

Option II

Discipline	Standard Credits	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Mathematics ^[1]	3	2
Laboratory Science ^[2]	3	2
Mathematics or Science ^{[1], [2]}	2	
History and Social Sciences ^[3]	3	2
Foreign Language ^[4]	2	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Economics	1	
Electives ^[5]	0	
CTE Concentration	4	
Student Selected Test ^[6]		1
Total	24	9



Other Board Policy Considerations

- The Board of Education could authorize and adopt Standards of Learning for economics education with 21st-century skills as a context.
- Students pursuing an Advanced Technical Diploma could have the option of receiving one credit in a fine arts or an economics course. The course could also be available for the Technical Diploma.

Other Board Policy Considerations

- Consideration could be given to permitting more career and technical verified credits to substitute for science or history and social science verified credits.
- Dual-enrollment credit earned through higher education institutions would continue to be permitted and encouraged.

Other Board Policy Considerations

- One consideration is to use the Commonwealth Scholars program as the basis for the Technical Diploma requirements.
- Commonwealth Scholars program requirements are:
 - 4 courses in English
 - 3 courses in mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II)
 - 3 courses in basic laboratory science (biology, chemistry, physics)
 - 3.5 courses in social studies (chosen from U.S. and Virginia history, U.S. and Virginia government, world history, world geography, economics, financial literacy)
 - 1 course in fine arts or career and technical education
 - 2 courses in the same language other than English



Major Components of Technical Diploma Options

- **Meets or exceeds rigor of current diplomas**
- **Requires rigorous mathematics and science courses**
- **Requires career concentration with embedded “soft skills”**
- **Provides for external verification of career concentration through industry certification or occupational assessment**

Concepts for Consideration

Graduation Rate Benchmarks

Board's Graduation Formula

- Section 22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to prescribe a formula to ensure the uniform assessment of high school graduation rate.
- The Board adopted the following formula on November 29, 2006:

Graduation rate = [On-time graduates in Year X] / [(First-time entering ninth graders in Year X-4) + (Transfers in) – (Transfers out)]

Board's Graduation Formula

- The formula defines graduates as students who earn Standard, Advanced Studies, Modified Standard, Special, and General Achievement diplomas within four years of the first time they entered the ninth grade.
- Consistent with the policy adopted by the Board on November 29, 2006, students receiving special education services and students with limited-English proficiency who have plans in place to allow them more time to graduate will be assigned to different cohorts.

Graduation Rate in 2008

- In the fall of 2008, the records of first-time ninth graders in 2004-2005 will be able to be linked to their records four years later to determine their graduation status.
- The incorporation of the graduation rate benchmark as an accreditation factor is expected to be applicable for the first time in 2008-2009 for accreditation ratings in the fall of 2009-2010, the first school year following the effective date of the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation.

Options for the Graduation Rate Benchmark

- **Option 1:** The Board could set the prior year's actual state graduation rate, or a percentage of that rate, as the graduation rate benchmark that high schools must achieve to meet full accreditation.

For example, the actual statewide graduation rate for 2008 would be the required benchmark that high schools must earn in 2008-2009, for an accreditation rating for 2009-2010. With this option, the required graduation rate benchmark could change every year, based on the prior year's actual graduation rate.

Options for the Graduation Rate Benchmark

- **Option 2:** The Board could set the graduation rate benchmark based on a method as prescribed in the SOA with automatic adjustments at designated future years.
- **Option 3:** The Board could set a specific, numeric graduation rate benchmark. Most of the public comments that addressed this issue recommended initially setting the graduation rate at 80 percent. The rate could be increased in subsequent years.

Applying the Graduation Rate Benchmark

- High schools would have to meet both the Standards of Learning pass rates and the graduation rate benchmark in order to be “Fully Accredited.”
- A high school that meets the Standards of Learning pass rates but does not meet the required graduation rate benchmark would have an accreditation rating of “Accredited with Warning.”
- Ultimately, a high school could be denied accreditation if its graduation rate is below the graduation rate benchmark prescribed by the Standards of Accreditation.

Applying the Graduation Rate Benchmark

- Consistent with the policies currently in place for calculating accreditation rates, a school would be permitted to use a three-year trailing average for its graduation rates.

Applying the Graduation Rate Benchmark

- The accreditation rating would be calculated on the graduation rate for all students in the school. However, the graduation rates would be reported for all subgroups in the school, subject to a minimum “N” consistent with the provisions of NCLB.
- Dropout rates and completion rates would also be reported for all subgroups in the school. Completers are students in the ISAEP program who earn a GED, and students who earn a Certificate of Completion.

Safe Harbor

- The Board could establish a “safe harbor” for schools that do not meet, but are close to meeting, the graduation rate benchmark. The Board could consider the following options:
 - **Option 1:** Increase the high school’s graduation rate by X percent.
 - **Option 2:** The five-year or six-year graduation rate exceeds the on-time graduation rate benchmark.
 - **Option 3:** Decrease the non-graduation rate by X percent (i.e., non-graduation rate = 1 - graduation rate).
- The threshold for safe harbor and for any option established by the Board would need to be determined.